



TEACHER'S RESPONSES TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

Education is important for all children including children with special needs. RTE Act (2009) encourages inclusive education wherein the schools will adapt themselves to accommodate children with special needs in classrooms. In this context, teacher is one of the most significant stakeholders who play a very crucial role in schools in promoting inclusive education. Therefore, the present study was taken up to find out the existing views of working teachers about inclusive education for children with special needs in their classrooms. To select the sample for the study, purposive sampling technique was used and also survey research design was used. An adapted version of SACIE (Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education by Loreman, Earle, Sharma, & Forlin, 2008) was used to collect the data. The data was collected from 40 teachers from five schools in Mysuru. The results revealed that majority of teachers were favourable towards Inclusive Education. However, few of the teachers were unfavourable and few of them were neither favourable nor unfavourable and reasons expressed by teachers were lack of knowledge and skills, lack of time, and many other varied practical reasons which were a hindrance to include children with special needs in their respective classrooms. The study underscores solution oriented approach to be initiated for promoting and extending guidance and training through sensitization programs to the working teachers in enhancing their knowledge and skills that contributes to the success of inclusive education.

KEYWORDS: Inclusive Education, Teacher's responses.

INTRODUCTION:

The Right to Education Act (2009) emphasises on education for all children including children with special needs by strengthening the existing education system to meet the learning needs of all children. Inclusive education is a national mission and is achievable. However, the success of inclusive education depends on several factors such as Government initiatives, Strong support system in the society, Administration and implementation at authority level and financial management, utilization of finance and other resources, parental and active teacher's participation. There are few other challenges such as attitudinal barriers, lack of knowledge and skills among teachers and administrators, not seeing child first and as a priority, administration problems etc. To promote inclusive education, all the stakeholders must actively participate and one important stakeholder is teacher. Research studies have shown that views of the teachers play a crucial role in the success or failure of inclusive education. Shade and Stewart (2001) have opined that 'for the success of inclusive education, attitudes of teachers play an important role. They suggested that training period of teachers is important for modification of their attitudes in promoting positive attitude towards inclusion. Researchers like Deisinger and Odom (2000) have stated that teachers' beliefs and attitudes play an important role in the progress of special children in inclusive schools. Usually teachers are apprehensive about accepting children with special needs in their classroom due to lack of training. Forlin (1998) and Webster (1999) believed that teachers should have certain necessary skills, empathy and interpersonal skills to deal with special children and also to provide them with necessary guidance. Positive attitude plays an important role in the success of inclusive education (Jobe, Rust and Brissie, 1996).

Need for the study:

The above literature highlights the important role of teacher's in promoting inclusive education. Hence, the present study was taken up by the investigators seeking to examine how teachers perceive inclusive education.

Aim of the study:

To find out the teacher's responses towards inclusive education in primary school level

METHOD:

Sample:

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Based on this technique, five schools were selected in Mysuru. All the teachers working in these schools were included as sample.

Table 1: The details of schools selected for the study

Sl. No.	School Code	Total Number of Teachers
1	A	7
2	B	11
3	C	9
4	D	5
5	E	8
Total		40

Tool:

An adapted version of SACIE (Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education by Loreman, Earle, Sharma, & Forlin, 2008) was used to collect data from the teachers. The first section was designed to gather necessary demographic details of the teachers. The second section contained 22 statements and was designed to elicit teacher's views towards the inclusion education. Modifications were made as per their suggestions and the final adapted scale for the study was developed and was also translated in Kannada for collecting data from Kannada medium school teachers.

Procedure for data collection:

Permission was sought from Principals of the selected schools to conduct the study. For collecting data, the final scale was administered on 40 teachers in five schools in Mysuru. There were totally 22 statements in the scale on a Likert-type classification and the total maximum score is '88' and the minimum score is '22'. If the scores fall in the range from '0- 30', indicates unfavourable towards inclusive education, scores falling in the range from '31 - 60', indicates neither favourable nor unfavourable towards inclusive education. i.e. undecided and the scores falling in the range from '61 -88' indicates favourable towards inclusive education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The data collected was analyzed using appropriate statistics based on the aim which was to find out the existing views of working teachers towards inclusive education in various schools. Data was collected from five schools which include 40 teachers in total. However, four teachers returned incomplete scale, hence they were not included. Table 2 represents responses of 36 teachers towards inclusive education.

Table 2: Responses of teachers towards inclusive Education

Scores	Particulars	Total number of teachers	Percentage (%)
0-30	Unfavorable	04	11
31 - 60	Undecided (neutral)	08	22
61 - 88	Favorable	24	67
Total		36	100

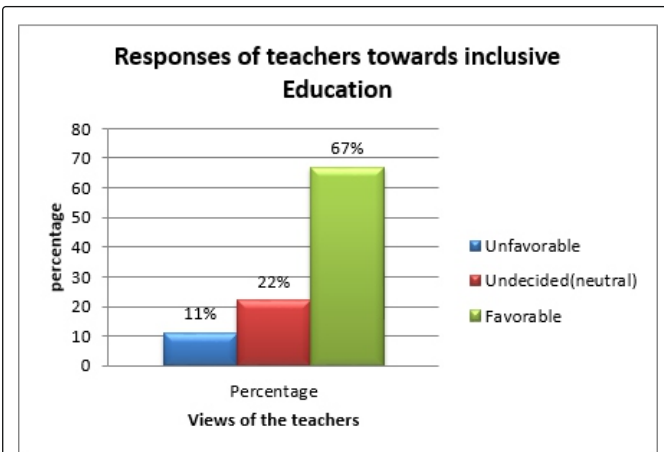


Figure 1: Responses of teachers in percentage towards inclusive education

The Table 2 shows the percentage obtained by the teachers on the scale. The scores revealed that 11 percentages of teachers were not favouring inclusive education. Twenty two percentages of teachers had neutral views. Investigators tried to find out the reasons for such types of responses and the reasons mentioned by teachers were lack of knowledge and skills to handle special children, different and severe types of children with special needs; not having knowledge about how to teach each child with different special needs;; Practically no time to allocate to special children; regular work burden; strength of the class; already less time to complete the portions prepare the children for examination and lack of barrier free environment for children with special needs. This is in accordance with the study by Rajasekhar and Vijetha (2014) assessed the physical environment of inclusive schools for children with hearing impairment in Mysore using a checklist and found that there were many areas to be worked upon for improvement to promote inclusive education for children with special needs. Sixty seven percentage of teacher's were favourable towards inclusive education. These teachers may be those teachers who already have an exposure in teaching children with special needs included in their class. These results are in accordance with the findings of Liber and Capbell (2001) who stated that there is a recent focus on the attitude that teachers have toward inclusion, experienced teachers have more positive attitudes to education of children with special needs as compared to those with less experience. The findings also revealed that teachers teaching with experience with children with special needs were more acceptable for inclusive education as compared to those teachers who did not have any experience in teaching children with special needs in their classrooms. The findings underscore that there is a need for appropriate and realistic guidance and training through sensitization programs as well as solution oriented approach to promote inclusive education for children with special needs among teachers by empowering them who are the most important stakeholders.

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